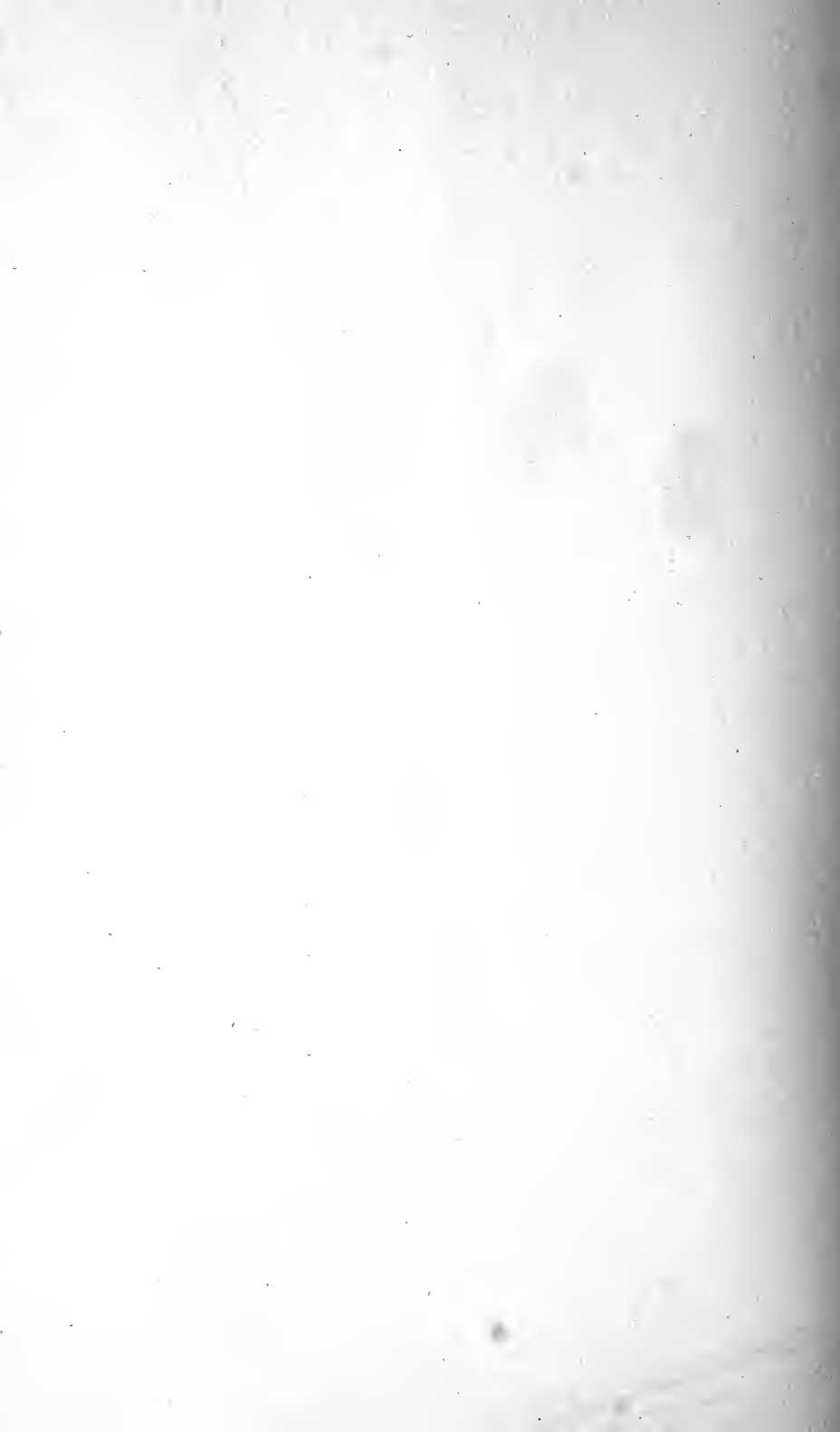


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Creation

and other Poems —







CREATION
and OTHER POEMS

By
ARTHUR WELLINGTON ANDERSON



JAMESTOWN, N. Y.
1922

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Dedicated to My Mother

Creation

BEFORE all things in earth's created realm
A wat'ry waste, the world in chaos moved;
And brooding over all, Jehovah's love
Conceived in darkness all the works of light.
Through countless aeons He His purpose wrought,
And order came where only chance had been.
He spoke the word, and lo, the infant light
Knocked at the portals of chaotic night.
Feeble at first, it struggled with the gloom,
But brighter grew as ages came and went—
'Til looming through the mists the earth appeared,
A shining disk; drifting in endless space.
Again He spoke and night and day began
Their ceaseless round of alternating reign;
And still the earth was but a dreary mass
Of heaving waters rolling wave on wave.
With heavens high He arched the waters o'er
Dividing all above from all below
And made the "empty places" limitless
For future glories of His handiwork.
At His command the caverns of the deep
Yawned, and the sea was downward drawn
And then dry land appeared above the flood.
For ocean's sway He set the metes and bounds
That by His will it should not overpass

And with a thundrous roar the mountains rose;
The formless earth its primal shape assumed.
The dismal light no shadows threw nor changed
But amber glowed and faint, day after day.
The Great Creator forth His fiat sent,
And sun and moon upon their courses sped;
And stars in an unnumbered multitude
On nothing hung, and sent their brightness out.
No more the melancholy half-light gleamed,
A crystal radiance supervened the dusk—
The air was pregnant with vitality—
The world seemed waiting for a miracle!
A flaming herald lit the eastern sky
And slowly rose the sun, a ball of fire.
His genial rays the sodden earth did warm,
Transmuting all her rugged form of wealth;
Unlocking for the need of time to come
The boundless treasure-houses of the soil.
The thirsty land devoid of shelt'ring shade
Sweltered and parched beneath his fervent heat.
Down headlong rushing through heav'n's pathless void
His chariots into the ocean plunged
And 'neath its waters cooled their burning shards;
Then to the heavens returned as vap'ry wraiths,
In black'ning clouds o'erspreading all the sky.
Now shot the lightnings forth, and thunders crashed,
And deep detoning earth's foundations shook,
While from the west, with mighty blast the wind
Its besom blew, over a lifeless world.
The air, once quiv'ring with the sun's fierce heat,
Was laden with the moistened breath of clouds.
Then broke th' impending storm in fury full,
And rain descended on the thirsty ground.
The naked earth before her maker lay

Possessing naught of comeliness or charm;
Divinest love encompassed her about.
And clothed her in a robe of living green.
Upspringing from the rough and barren soil,
At His behest the herbs and grasses stood
And giant trees their lofty branches spread,
And forests swayed and tossed in every gale.
Morning and noon in full effulgence passed
And paled at eventide the sun's bright orb
As nightly in His crimson bed He sank
And left the world to his great counterpart.
When faded from the sky day's afterglow
And deep'ning night the world in darkness wrapped;
A star from out the vault of heavens blue
Glittered and flashed in pristine brilliancy—
Fore-runner of stupendous pageantry.
A thousand, thousand luminaries bright
Like jewels studded the ethereal plains,
Celestial systems centered 'round their suns
And planets their appointed orbits kept.
Upstreaming through immeasurable heights
A strange new light dawned on the darkling earth
And with majestic sweep night's ruler rose
Ascending swift her throne among the stars.
The world in silence 'neath her scepter passed
Nor saw her glory any living thing.
The firmament in astral beauty shone
And cast its image in an ancient sea
'Til with the dawning of another day
Its glory faded and dissolved away.
The avenues of ocean's deep abyss
No creature swam, no life did animate.
The mighty God stretched out His hand forthwith
And fish in teeming millions filled the seas.

In forms minute and monstrous made He them
Each fashioning according to his kind;
And winged fowls to fly above the earth
Beneath the open canopy of heaven.
Caressed by all the minions of the air
The fecund earth in glad response conceived
And fruitage of the tree and vine brought forth
In measure full, whose seed was in itself.
And God said "let four-footed things be made
And things that creep and crawl upon the earth
And it was so; and God pronounced it good.
And all the host of them created He—
Both male and female He created them
And said, "be fruitful thou and multiply.
The earth replenish; and thy food shall be
The grasses and the herbs that I have made."
So wrought the Lord; and yet no man was found
To till the soil or dress the fruitful vine.
Then in the council halls of Paradise
The Great Creator thus to angels spoke:
"Let us a being like ourselves create
To walk in our own image on the earth.
And unto him shall all things subject be
Upon the earth and in the air and sea—
And he shall have dominion over them."
From common clay the Lord created man
And in his nostrils breathed the breath of life.
And man henceforth became a living soul—
Majestic; Godlike in his attributes.
And God a garden planted where the flow
Of crystal rivers watered every side—
Where nature all her richest gifts bestowed
To make for man an earthly Paradise.
The man at early dawn in Eden stood;

Of aspect fearless and of manner mild;
Perfect in body and in mind complete;
Upstanding straight among the mindless beasts
That round him moved, obedient to his will.
Sweet to his senses came the songs of birds
And odors of new nature flourishing
In primitive abundance; bearing fruit
And flowers intermingled ceaselessly.
Daily his simple wants the earth supplied
And passing hours with new delights were fraught.
In awe and wonder he beheld the sun
Each morning rise in dazzling brilliancy
From out the vap'rous curtains of the sea—
And when the night came on he watched the stars,
And saw the moon sail o'er his native isle.
And yet remained the man unsatisfied!
A longing vague his human heart possessed
For human love; and dear companionship.
"It is not good"—the Lord declared—"for man
To be alone; a mate I will create."
And Adam slept—and when he woke, behold
The crown of God's creation near him stood—
A woman—of his flesh and bone a part,
To be through life his comforter and friend.
In blissful state the first created pair
Their lives began beneath God's filial smile.
Instinctive love each for the other bore,
And each in other's presence found delight.
No care or sorrow marred their happy lot;
But each new day new happiness contained—
The unaffrighted beasts their presence sought
And lovely nature constant joy bequeathed.
Thus finished the Creator all His work,
From all His labor resting satisfied.

The Old Manse

IN a tall, old fashioned dwelling
Of an old New England Town
Where the birds their joys were telling
Underneath the gables brown,
Happily we dwelt together,
My two hostesses and I,
And in fair or stormy weather
Each did with the other vie
In some kindly thought expressing
Or some bit of cheerful news,
Daily happenings redressing
In the garb of private views.
Like the mountain Oak that towers
On the rugged rocky height
Where the threat'ning storm-cloud lowers—
Yearly adding to its might,
Nearing four-score years, the Mother
Still her youthful soul possessed
And endeavored still to gather
Truth from life that 'round her pressed.
With a ready recollection
Of the days that once had been
When within the homes protection
She the outer world had seen
Through the medium of neighbors
'Round her father's country store

Who, in respite from their labors
Met and gossiped at the door.
When the sun's last rays were falling
On Wachusetts' lofty crest
And the robin's mate was calling
From the perch above the nest,
She would tell us of her girlhood,
Of the church, and school, and home,
Of the pastures and the wild-wood
And the fields she loved to roam—
Tell in broken, halting phrases,
Of a youthful love affair;
Call from out the past's dim mazes
Half in story, half in prayer
Visions of her school-boy lover
Ever faithful, ever true—
Growing dearer to her ever
As the changing seasons flew,
Till in love's sweet consummation
They their highest bliss had found
And the sacred consecration
Had each to the other bound.
Children blessed them and they travelled
On through life as lovers still
With devotion that unravelled
Tangled skeins that boded ill.
Halted now the story's current
As she told with eyes of love
How her sweetheart crossed the torrent
At the summons from above;
Called her to his side in passing
And his parting kiss bestowed
Tenderly her brow caressing
E'er he sought the Blest abode.

Thus she ended, and sat dreaming;
While the daughter to the guest
Oracle of music seeming—
Talked of this her constant quest—
Of her years of preparation
For the present days of skill
And the golden compensation
For the efforts and the will
To achieve in largest measure
Self-forgetting in the strife
Naught to know of rest and leisure
Through the early years of life.
Far had gone her fame for learning
In her chosen field of art
And her worth, the youth discerning
Came to listen and be taught
All the precepts of the ages
That to minstrelsy belong
Told by muses to the sages
In the artistry of song.
In the evening, when the shadows
Crept around our cottage door
And the fog wraiths from the meadows
Gathered over fen and moor,
Up the stairway softly droning
Is my attic door ajar
Came the viol's tender moaning
Like the forest winds afar.
And the sound of merry laughter
Floating upward through the hall
Echoed back from beam and rafter
Ceasing at the teacher's call.

* * * * *

Round in order there they gathered
Ruddy youth and maiden fair
Each a string creation bearing,
Tested now with patient care.
Then the Tutor's hand uplifted,
Poised the bow each neophyte,
And from softest cadence sighing
Mounting through crescendoes bright,
Laughing, shouting, singing, sobbing,
Or in tender tones of love,
Swelled the mighty soul of music,
And its wild enchantment wove.
Thus the days were filled with gladness
And the nights with music rang
While the muses to my fancies
Songs of wondrous beauty sang.

*September in a New England
Village*

TODAY I climbed the hill alone
And stood beside an arch of stone.

The landscape smiled beneath the sun;
The strong wind shook the ripened corn

And silently went sailing by
The fleecy navies of the sky.

I saw their changeful shadows play
Upon the mountains far away

Each shape fantastic giving place
To others in the onward race.

Beneath me lay the peaceful homes
And churches raised their lofty domes.

The sunshine glorified the trees
And roused to life the drowsy bees.

Across the intervening vale
I saw the tower on the hill

Upraising high its massy eaves
Above the tapestry of leaves;

Confining in its oaken cell
Its giant clock and sweet-toned bell.

The river flowed the hills between,
The birches o'er its banks did lean;
And strewed their leaves—no longer green—
Upon the water's silver sheen.
Far down the valley's winding course
I heard the heron's challenge hoarse
And from a distant farm there came
The sound of children at a game
And cattle lowing at the gates;
And horses neighing for their mates.
Adown the waves of ether bright
Came notes of wild fowl in their flight;
And sweet on the September air
Came odors from the pines afar.
The blue jay's thrilling cry I heard
And saw him coming from the wood
In all his gay habiliments,
To take the gardens' increments.
The wild grapes hung, of sweetness full,
In glowing clusters on the wall,
And orchards, from the hills sent down
Their fragrance on the quiet town.
The frost had killed the pumpkin vines
And passing through the garden lanes
Had touched each plant with hand austere
And left it standing brown and sere.
But beautiful the fruit they bore;
The crowning glory of the year.

Around the country school-house rude
The red leaves of the sumac showed

While 'long the peaceful road arrayed
The elm trees stood—a tall brigade.

The flaming leaves of beech and oak
Were mingled with the fir trees dark

And near the maples' scarlet hood
The yellow-mantled poplars stood.

The alders bent above the brook
And tints from nature's spectrum took

Where farmer boys with line and hook
Their quarry sought in shady nook.

Thus lay the land in verdure fair
And nature's music filled the air.

The Lovers

UPON the old ancestral farm,
Far from the City's noisome strife,
'Mid natures' grand symposium,
He lived the Farmers' simple life.

He felt the cool embrace of dawn
E're Phoebus had his race begun
And heard the first bright morning song
Of birds that hailed the rising sun.

For him the morning glories bloomed
Anew when each new day was born,
And shone, a matchless diadem,
Upon the shining brow of morn.

Through summer's heat and winter's cold.
The ever-changing seasons wound
In one continuous pageantry
Their never-ceasing circles round.

But incomplete the Farmer's life
As passing days their voices brought
With intermingling visions of
The maiden fair whose love he sought.

By stages imperceptible
The cold and snow had passed away
And rousing from her icy sleep
The earth had smiled in blossoms gay.

And hand in hand these lovers walked
Under the glory of the trees
Hearing the Robins' mating song
Amid the busy hum of bees.

The blue birds nesting overhead
In silence heard the lovers' vows
And saw the blissful pair caress
Beneath the overhanging boughs.

Then all the world seemed glorified
And nature in a mood benign
Listened while sweet the voices rang
Of birds in symphonies divine.

Glacier Valley

ALONE I walked a recent morn
In eager haste and happy mood
To where, at a primeval dawn
A mighty glacier frowning stood.

And while I thought upon the past
Of the fair valley spread below
There 'rose beside me, white and vast
A dazzling wall of ice and snow.

The dismal arctic night was gone
And rising in his might, the sun
In warm effulgent glory shone;
The ice king's giant task was done.

For ages he his plows had sent
Across the desolate expanse
To till the soil; and rocks were rent
Or polished by their sidelong glance.

The vision vanished when a bird
From out his covert in a tree
Upon the vibrant air outpoured
The music of his matin lay.

Long centuries have passed between
The present and the ancient day
And for the wealth of verdure green
In passing have prepared the way.

The heritage of icy mound
Is vocal in a singing brook;
And in the cloven rock is found
Engraven, Nature's wonder book.

Where once the awful glacier 'rose
The little children romp and play,
The happy school-boy laughing goes
Where once the frozen peril lay.

With all the ardor of a boy
Fulfilling some long-cherished dream
I scarce concealed my unfeigned joy
As now I wandered down the stream.

Between the grasses wild and rank
And stately goldenrod that glowed
At intervals on either bank
Along its winding course it flowed.

By devious paths its way it found
Where reeds and rushes gently swayed,
By mossy bank and grassy mound
To pools where loit'ring cattle wade.

From bush and tree the feathered choir,
Each with his own unwritten score,
A part became of Nature's lyre
And each his richest vestments wore.

Bright butterflies and humming bees
Their meed of life and color brought
And flowers, nodding in the breeze
The sunlight's benediction sought.

Here, where a primal ocean lay
And unknown rivers rushed and roared
In seething foam and feath'ry spray,
The records of the past are stored.

And generations yet unborn
Shall wonder at the cryptic signs
Upon the rocks asunder torn
Where clamber now the running vines.

Memory

THE Winter days are gone, dear heart,
The Spring has come at last,
And nature o'er the landscape brown
A robe of green has cast.

In gorgeous beauty bloom the flow'rs
And perfume sweet distil
While birds in ecstasies of song
The list'ning senses thrill.

But O, the days so slowly pass
Since you departed, dear;
A week its hours dragging by
Seems strangely like a year.

When shadows of the fading day
Upon our dwelling fall,
And feathered songsters from the trees
Their gay companions call—

When all the voices of the night
Wake from the day's repose,
And cooling counterpane is laid
Upon the new-born rose—

Our babies close I gather, dear,
And think of you; and pray—
And wish that you might be again
As close to me as they.

I call your name sweetheart, and try
 To think that you are here;
As bright and joyous in my arms
 As you were yester-year.

In fancy once again I walk
 The woodland paths with you
Or wander by some silver stream
 That we together knew.

Again as in a waking dream
 Your voice I hear, and see
The glory of your smile, that once
 Was Paradise for me.

What bliss attended as we planned
 About our future home,
And saw the glowing visions of
 “The years that were to come.”

Our lives in sweetest unison
 Had blended into one
And loves unfailing miracle
 His holy reign begun.

Then fell like sudden night the truth
 That awful death was near
To take from me earth's sweetest joy
 Oh God—how did I bear

The bitter flood that swept my soul
 From all its moorings free,
And cast the crushed and broken wreck
 Adrift upon life's sea?

But life shall triumph over death
And faith shall hold its sway
Within my heart, and we shall meet
Again some glorious day.

E'en now my love the days are blessed
With memories of you
That fall upon my waiting heart
Like a refreshing dew.

I will not say farewell, dear girl,
But hail—forevermore—
For still you are my sweetheart, dear,
Just as you were before.

(Dedicated to my friend, Mr. Harper Gatton, in memory of his loved companion).

Morning

“**O**H morning bright! Oh morning glorious!
Who saw thee when thou mad'st thy first
approach

Announced by singing birds and waving fronds?
An eve of wondrous calm preceded thee
Hung with celestial lanterns great and small
That lent enchantment to the spectral forms
That rear themselves whene'er the daylight fades.
The hours passed while creatures of the night
Sported themselves or hunted for their prey.
The wind its vespers whispered in the trees
And brooks made music in the forest glens.
The moon in full-orbed grandeur sailed her course
And made at last her harbor in the west.
A cock sent forth his challenge to the dark
Prophetic of the day that was to be
And then a hush fell on the waiting earth
And nature lay in wrapped expectancy
Sensing afar the advent of her Lord.
In reedy pools and sedgy fastnesses
The frogs had ceased their piping one by one
And silence reigned where through the watches long
An orchestra had played in many keys.
Faint in the east an opalescent light
Tinted the sky and flushed the loit'ring clouds.
The low sweet twitter of a happing bird
Presaged the waking of a slumbering earth

And stirring in his lofty nest the hawk
Essayed his daily flight to meet the dawn.
A purple hue now tinged the eastern sky
Turning to carmine as the morn advanced.
Perched on the pine tree's highest pinnacle
A robin sang his morning orison
And the winged choristers of field and wood
Joined in a mighty anthem to the day.
The heavens brightened, and the king of light
Rose in red radiance from his misty bed
And turned each dew-drop to a glistening gem.
A thrill ran through earth's myriad forms of life
And gladness on the face of nature shone
Rejoicing in her metamorphosis.
In habitat remote from man's abode
The wild rose woke and blushed in brilliant hues
Casting its incense on the passing breeze;
And anchored in the shallows of the ponds
White fleets of water-lilies spread their sails
And scattered far their cargo's fragrant store.
With scent of trees and flowers redolent
The west-wind brought a sound of festive joy—
The songs of feathered minstrels merry-making.
In various guise and bearing each his part
They gathered where the herbage ranker grew
In valleys cool, beside the winding streams.
The oriole in the elm's high thatch of leaves
Dropped swiftly from his hanging nest anon
And spilled his liquid flute notes as he went,
A yellow jewel on a field of green.
The bobolink in gorgeous plumage dressed,
Hovered on quiv'ring wing above the grass
And poured a flood of music on the air
In seeming exultation o'er his lot.

But now a thousand voices smote the ear
In concord of sublimest melody
And all the place was resonant of Paradise—
Of harmonies unknown to mortal choirs.
Through symphonies and rhapsodies they bore
In chord ecstatic and in passage grand,
And all the voices of the universe
Proclaimed the glory of a day new-born.

The Forest Monarch

O H GIANT TREE! Thy mighty bole
The passing centuries have seen,
And unknown mornings have beheld
Thy lofty canopy of green.

The summer gale and wintry blast
In vain have beat upon thy face
And vainly weaker forces strove
For ages to usurp thy place.

Before the present race had found
In this fair wilderness a home,
Or rangers of the wide domain
In gainful quest had hither come;

The Indian saw thy lovely form
And pitched his tent beneath thy shade,
Gazing in wonder at the spread
Of thy great limbs above his head.

From immemorial time, the birds
Have nested in thy quiet boughs,
And strange nocturnal guests arrived,
Through the long days to nod and drowse.

Under thy far flung greenery
The wild deer passed the scorching noon
And 'round thy feet the gray raccoon
Played in the light of the harvest moon.

How oft, when heralds of the sky
Their trumpets blew and roared amain,
Creatures of field and wood have fled
From seeming death, thy lodge to gain.

The cleft that in thy side appears
Befell thee in some hapless hour
When strident winds unleashed from heav'n
Bereft thee of an arm of power.

But still thy robe of green itself
Renews each verdant eastertide,
And each returning autumn sees
Thy leafy garments glorified.

So live, thou ancient friend of man,
For generations yet to be,
A legacy beneficent
And beautiful,—Oh Giant Tree!









